

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 087

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, KS

SUBJECT: MEETINGS WITH NEW PRIME MINISTER AND
FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR CALLED ON NEW PRIME MINISTER CH'OE KYU-HA AND NEW FOREIGN MINISTER PAK TONG-CHIN JANUARY 6 FOR INITIAL COURTESY CALLS. BOTH PRIMIN AND FONMIN STRESSED DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN US RELATIONSHIP. PRIMIN REVIEWED PLANS FOR IMPROVING INFORMATION PROGRAM AND ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY. FONMIN SUGGESTED UN DISCUSSIONS EARLY FEBRUARY. AMBASSADOR URGED SENSITIVITY TO US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION IN DEVELOPMENT OF KOREAN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIMIN CHOE WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL IN EMPHASIZING DESIRE WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH US. HE SAID, AS RESULT LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT PARK, HIS EMPHASIS ON DOMESTIC SIDE WOULD BE IN CLEANING UP BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION AND GAINING GREATER PUBLIC TRUST AND RESPECT FOR ROKG. BUREAUCRATS WOULD BE EXPECTED MAINTAIN "MODEL" LIFE. HE ALSO INTENDS GIVE FAR GREATER ATTENTION TO KOREAN IMAGE ABROAD AND FOREIGN REACTION TO KOREAN DOMESTIC POLICIES. FOR THIS REASON ASSISTANT MINISTER KIM TONG-HWI HAS BEEN
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SHIFTED FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY TO VICE MINISTER OF CULTURE

AND INFORMATION, WHILE FORMER CULTURE AND INFORMATION VICE MINISTER YI KYU-HYON HAS BEEN APPOINTED CHIEF SECRETARY OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. BOTH WILL BE EXPECTED TO GIVE FOREIGN REACTION AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES ABROAD GREATER EMPHASIS. CHOE ALSO INTENDS TO STRENGTHEN KOREA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND BUILD UP ECONOMIC SECTION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH INFUSION ECONOMIC EXPERTS FROM OUTSIDE THE MINISTRY.

3. CHOE ALSO MENTIONED THAT DURING PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE, EXPECTED BETWEEN JANUARY 10 AND 15, PRESIDENT WILL REAFFIRM CURRENT ROKG FOREIGN POLICY, STRESSING RELATIONS WITH US, DESIRE FOR NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, AND RECONSIDERATION OF UN PROBLEM. ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, PRESIDENT WILL PUT EMPHASIS ON "PURIFICATION."

4. FONMIN LIKEWISE URGED CLOSEST POSSIBLE CONSULTATION BETWEEN ROKG AND USG. HE CURRENTLY IN PROCESS OF RE-SHUFFLING FOREIGN MINISTRY AND GIVING FURTHER CONSIDERA-

TION TO UN PROBLEM. AFTER REVIEWING UN PROBLEM WITH PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER, HE SEEKS EARLY CONSULTATIONS WITH USG FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSIONS WITH "CORE GROUP." HE RECOGNIZES NEED TO LEAVE OPEN ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS ON UN BEFORE DECISION FINALLY MADE. HE SUGGESTED OPENING DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR IN EARLY FEBRUARY.

5. IN BOTH CONVERSATIONS, AMBASSADOR REVIEWED PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEMS FACED ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PARTICULARLY, AND URGED SENSITIVITY TO THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN FORMULATION ROKG POLICY. AMERICAN PUBLIC INTEREST PARTICULARLY IN KIM DAE-JUNG AND KIM CHI-HA CASES MENTIONED.

6. REQUESTED ACTION: GIVEN ROKG UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE REVIEWING UN OPTIONS, REQUEST CONFIRMATION RESULTS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY FOR CONSULTATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER EARLY FEBRUARY.
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